

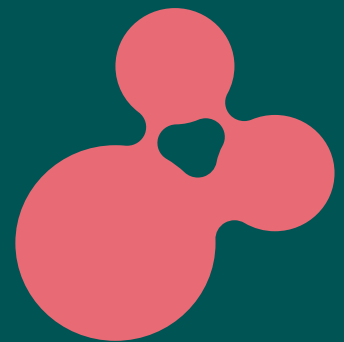
July 2024



**PRIOR
+ PTNRS**

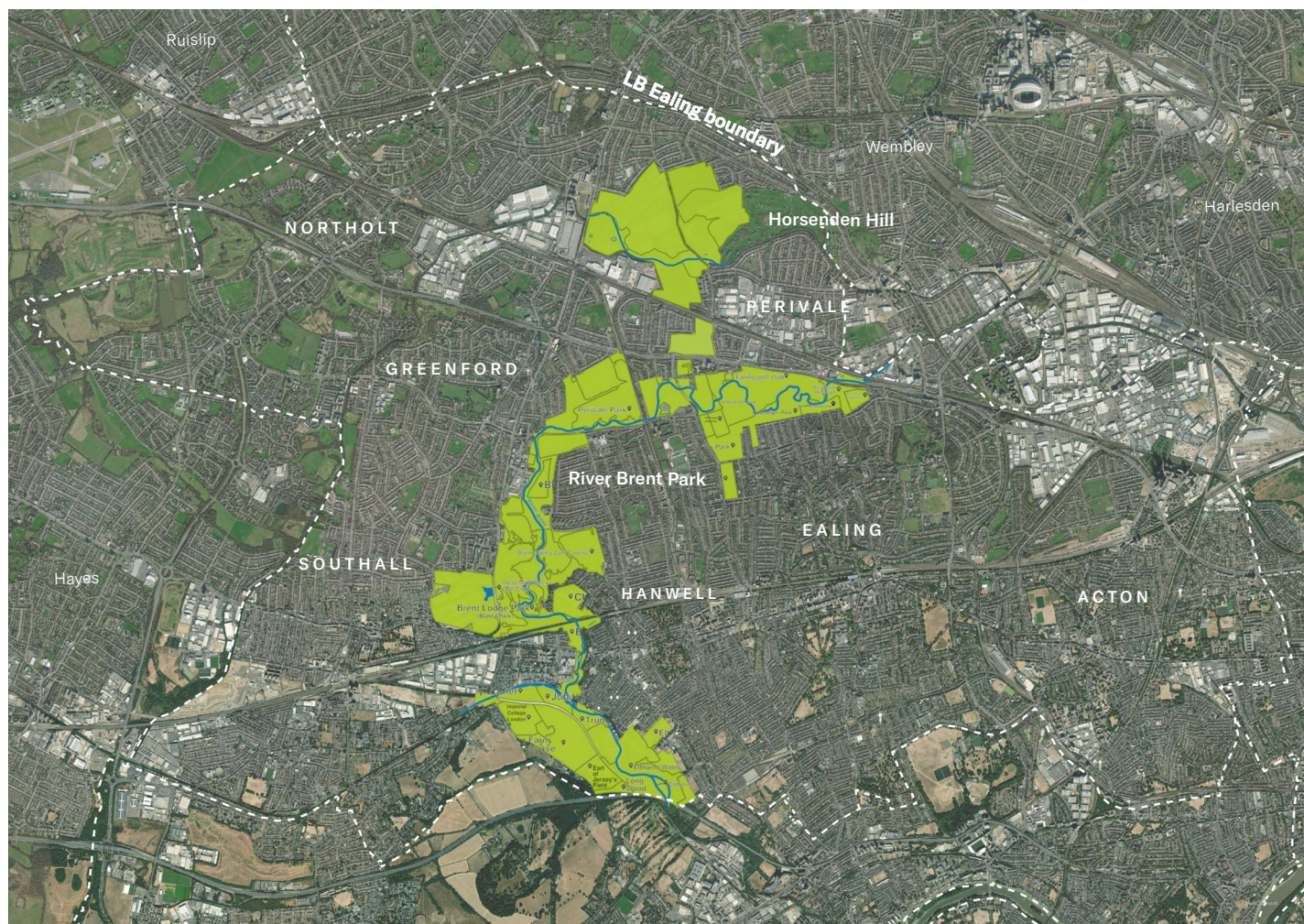
Ealing Regional Park

Concept Plan Report Executive Summary



Issued by Prior + Partners alongside
Gillespies, Greengage, Civic Engineers and Flint

Introduction



Indicative location and extent of Ealing Regional Park

Why a regional park?

Ealing Council declared a climate emergency in April 2019. A regional park offers the perfect opportunity to develop a more connected Ealing that is equipped to tackle the Climate Emergency by putting nature and communities at the heart of a green recovery, driving locally-led economic regeneration in a way that is good for nature, climate and people.

Ealing Regional Park would offer 8 kilometres of linked spaces and elevate the existing collection of parks that already provide vital open space for the local residents into somewhere that can offer health, wellbeing and access to nature borough-wide.

Where is the regional park?

While there is not yet a fixed map of the regional park, an option the Council are considering is for it to be based around the River Brent and Horsenden Hill. Nearly 200,000 people live within a 20-minute walk of this potential regional park, supporting the creation of thriving local neighbourhoods with great parks and amenities close to home.

What is this report?

In winter 2024, Ealing Council commissioned this concept plan, the aim of which is to develop a long-term vision and spatial strategy for the regional park.

How was the concept plan developed?

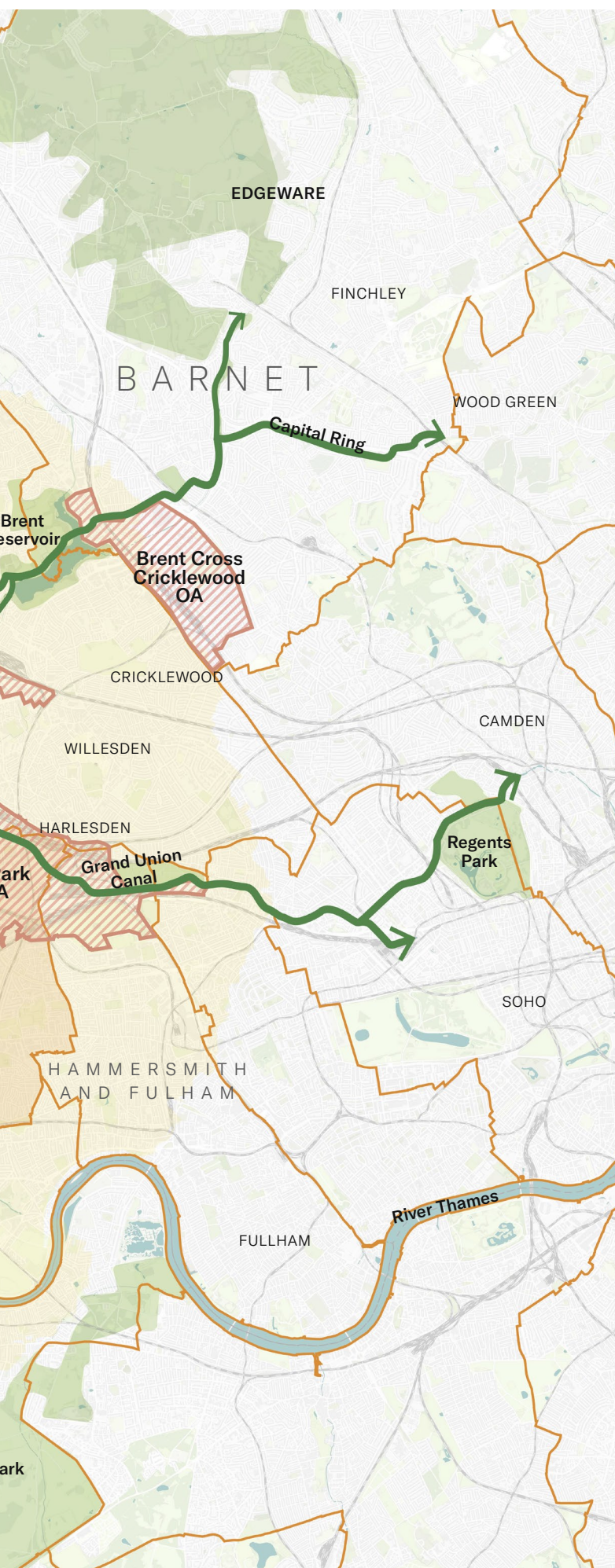
The concept plan is the result of collaboration between Ealing Council, local and regional stakeholders and the community. The priorities outlined in this document represent many of the ambitions and aspirations of these stakeholders. A programme of engagement took place in winter and spring 2024, and included the following events and feedback streams:

- Residents survey
- Stakeholder workshops
- 1:1 meetings and conversations
- Public drop-in sessions and workshops

These conversations were complemented by site visits, desktop research, and best practice research.



Ealing Regional Park in the West London context



A Regional Park for West London

The indicative extent of Ealing Regional Park is largely defined around the River Brent corridor, which presents a strategic opportunity to think in the long term about a park which **crosses boundaries** into neighbouring LB Hounslow, LB Brent and LB Barnet to create a continuous park along the river, as well as westward green connections into LB Hillingdon.

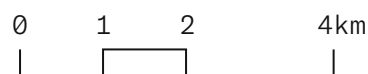
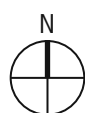
The London Plan defines regional parks as having a catchment of 8km. Ealing Regional Park would serve not only local and Ealing residents, but be an amenity and an attraction for people from all over West London.

Traversing the park area are existing **strategic walking and cycling routes** including the Capital Ring - a walking and cycling loop around all of London - and Grand Union Canal towpaths. These strategic routes link Ealing Regional Park into a vast network of parks and open spaces in west London, with connections into Richmond Park in the south, Colne Valley Regional Park and London's Green Belt in the west, Brent Reservoir and Mill Hill in the north, and Regent's Park in the east.

These routes also traverse many of west London's **opportunity areas**, including Southall and Old Oak Park Royal Opportunity Areas in Ealing, opening up the regional park as an accessible amenity to the borough's growth areas.

Key

	Opportunity Areas
	Regional Park 8km catchment
	Strategic walking / cycling links
	Borough boundaries



Vision

1.1.1 Vision and themes

Ealing Council developed an early vision and thematic priorities that define the long term ambition and drivers for the regional park.

Vision

Ealing Regional Park

More than a Day Out

Ealing Regional Park will become a new destination for lovers of nature, culture and play. A space to replenish your health, support the local economy and have fun.

The Park will act as a green lung for London: strengthening our climate resilience whilst improving air quality for future generations.

Themes



1.1.2

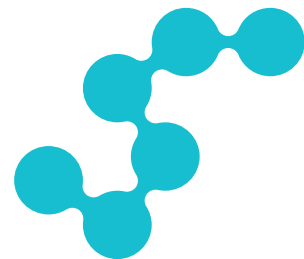
Spatial principles

The below spatial principles reflect key priorities in creating a cohesive, accessible, inclusive, resilient and vibrant regional park.



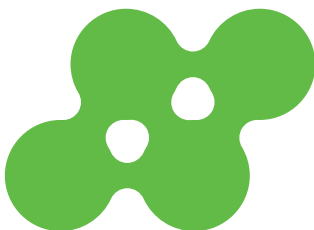
Connecting communities

Enhance connections into the park for surrounding communities to improve access to nature, amenity, and create opportunities for better health and wellbeing. Connect communities from beyond Ealing into the park.



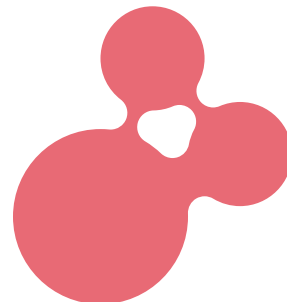
Overcoming barriers

Overcome barriers to movement created by road, rail, water and publicly inaccessible spaces to improve the park experience, accessibility, and role as a sustainable movement corridor.



Natural resilience

Enhance the River Brent for water management and as an ecological corridor. Enhance key locations for nature to allow biodiversity to flourish in wilder parts of the park. Improve the ecological connectivity between Horsenden Hill and the southern park. Connect into surrounding green areas.



Bring the park to life

Create focal points of activity which build on existing facilities, creating gateways and destinations in the park. Bring culture, leisure, education and community in, serving Ealing's diversity and creating a place to celebrate, learn, connect and enjoy.

Focal Areas



1.1.3



A mosaic of complementary spaces

The vision is for Ealing Regional Park to flourish as a collection of diverse and complementary spaces linked both for people - via a new **Regional Park Trail**, a pedestrian and cycle connection that runs the length of the park - and ecologically by natural corridors.

Four **focal areas** are proposed along Ealing Regional Park's linear network of spaces: the most active destinations within the park. Focal areas are designed to leverage existing features and characteristics and to have strong links to their surrounding areas. Each focal area could have a range of different elements from local sports and play, to more significant visitor attractions such as outdoor events spaces and visitors centres, to wildflower meadows and biodiverse rich landscapes.

The most southern focal area, **Warren Farm**, will be both a new sports facility alongside a nature reserve, as defined in emerging Local Plan policy. Detailed plans are yet to be worked up. Warren Farm would also be the southernmost point of the Regional Park Trail, with a key park gateway on Windmill Lane, facilitating future connections to Osterley Park.

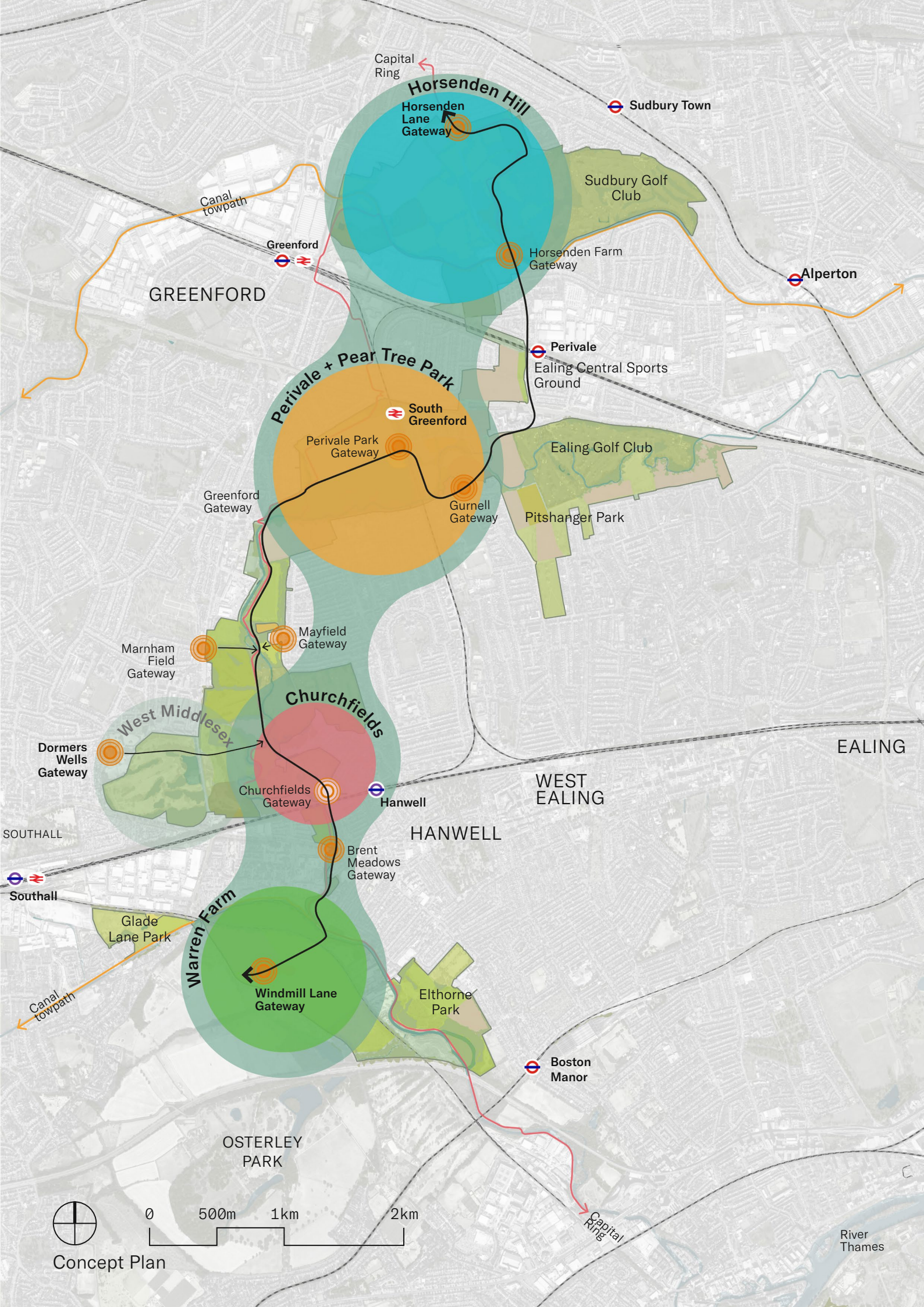
The **Churchfields** focal area renews the existing Churchfields Recreation Ground. North of the Wharncliffe viaduct and close to Hanwell station, there is already a number of attractions at Churchfields including Hanwell Zoo, the Millennium Maze and Brent Lodge Playground. It is proposed these be upgraded

and supplemented with more visitor facilities: a café, visitor centre and outdoor cultural venue - an amphitheatre style space that could sit within natural landforms to allow for outdoor performances. The existing stables could potentially be retrofitted as a visitor centre.

Perivale + Pear Tree Park recently opened as the borough's newest park and has the opportunity for significant rewilding and wetlands creation alongside natural play weaved into the landscape. The sports facilities focused around the athletics track could be improved and intensified with the potential for more all weather pitches and community growing areas. The café and parking area is a main gateway for the park and links to proposals for Gurnell Leisure Centre and the teen play and skate park proposed there.

Horsenden Hill already offers 'more than a day out,' and it is proposed that the existing facilities are supplemented with increased attractions such as high ropes and increased natural play areas in the woods, a glamping offer, strengthening of Horsenden Farm and interpretation of the beaver enclosure at Paradise Fields.

There are opportunities for more natural and wild spaces and ecologically-focused areas throughout the park outside of the more intensified focal areas.



Concept Plan

0 500m 1km 2km

Uses and Activation



Sports

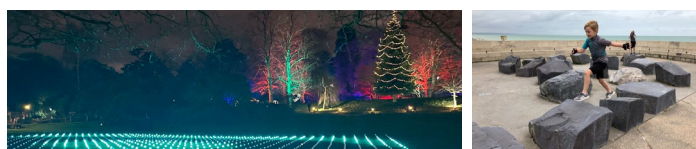
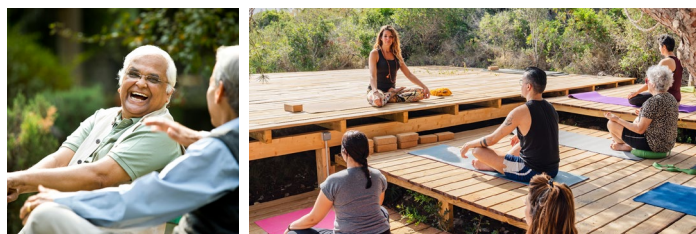
Space for organised and informal sports will be integrated throughout the park, with clusters of pitches around focal areas. Much of the sports infrastructure exists today, but could be supplemented by improved drainage to existing pitches, refurbishment of tennis courts and MUGAs, as well as the introduction of new all-weather pitches and a sports hub at Warren Farm. Informal sports areas, such as yoga/dance platforms, marked running and cycle trails and fitness equipment for all can also be included.

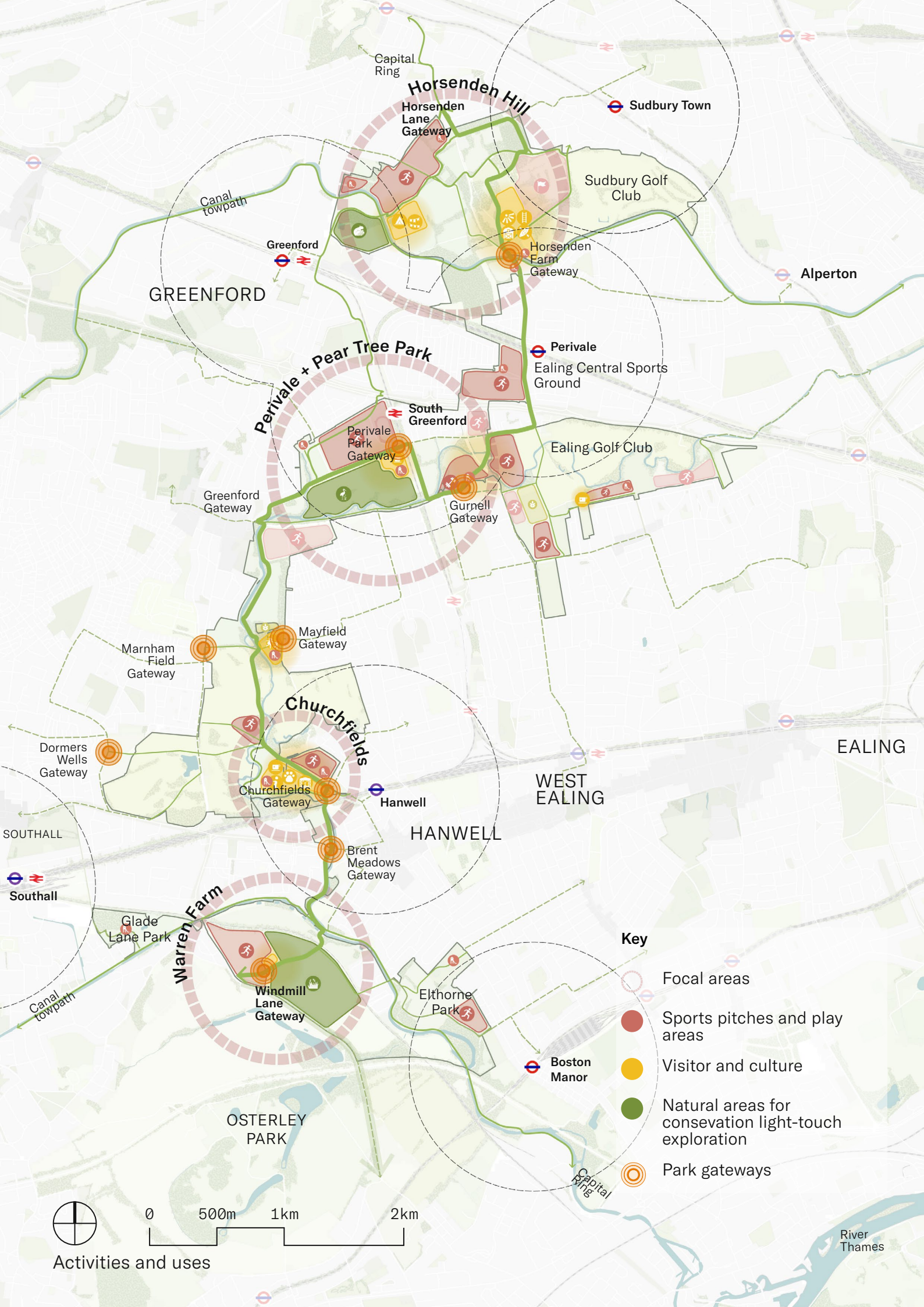
Play

A network of play for all ages, formal and informal, is envisioned in the park. Designated play areas could be invested in and existing play areas improved. There is also the opportunity for informal natural play along the Regional Park Trail and the River Brent, as well as space for older children in terms of hang out space and safe areas to meet and gather.

Visitor and culture

To be more than a day out, existing visitor facilities need to be improved and new experiences introduced. There are a number of disused buildings that could be invested in as visitor centres and hubs for community groups. There is much potential to exploit Ealing's reputation as the Borough of Festivals and an opportunity to embed a flexible outdoor cultural venue for performances.





Connectivity



The network of movement measures include:

↔ **Ealing Regional Park Trail** is the primary park trail. It is high quality, lit and accessible, connecting all focal areas and accessible from surrounding stations and town centres.

↔ **Public realm improvements** along Horsenden Lane South to connect the north and south of the park.

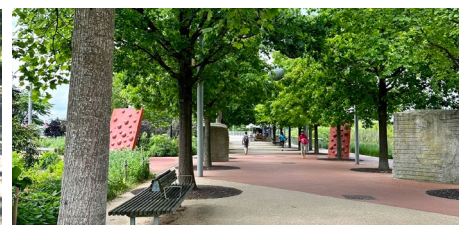
⚙️ **Two new bridges** are required to ensure the trail is safe and accessible: across the Grand Union Canal at Lock 97 and across the Brent between Brent River Park and Brentfield Cricket Ground.

◆ **Improved signage and crossings** to improve pedestrian accessibility where the trail intersects with major roads at Uxbridge Road and the A40.

⚙️ Long term potential for a **green bridge over the A40**, enhancing both pedestrian and ecological connectivity.

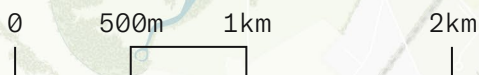
↔ The Regional Park Trail would be complemented by **secondary paths** that connect in and out of the park.

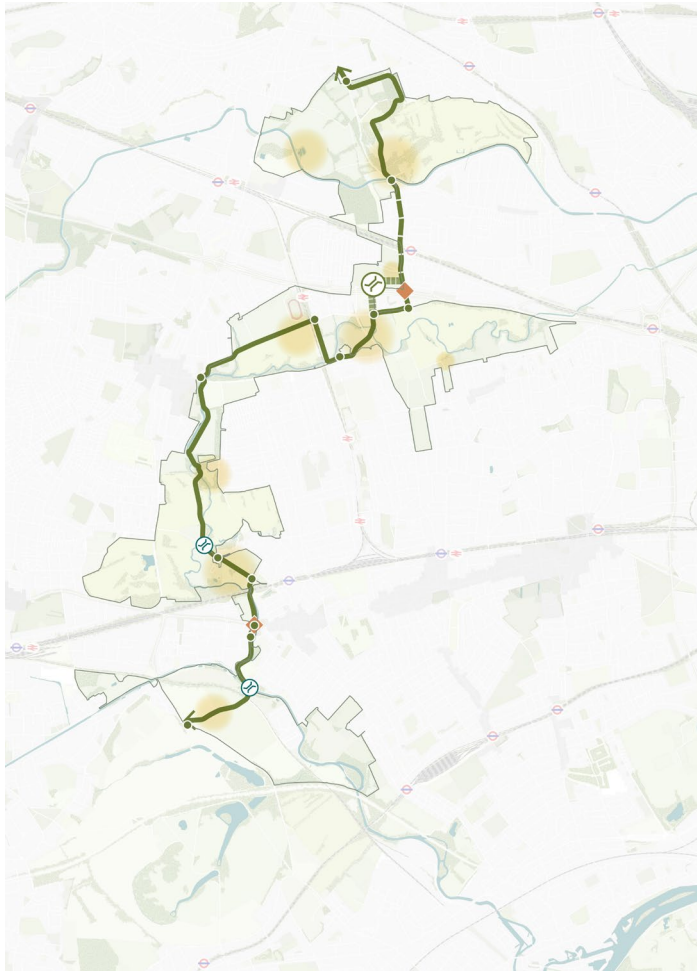
↔ A network of neighbouring streets could be designed as **'green fingers'** that connect park entrances with nearby open spaces, stations, centres, community facilities and schools. These streets would have increased tree planting and signage and could be designed as 'quietways' for pedestrian and cyclists.





Movement strategy

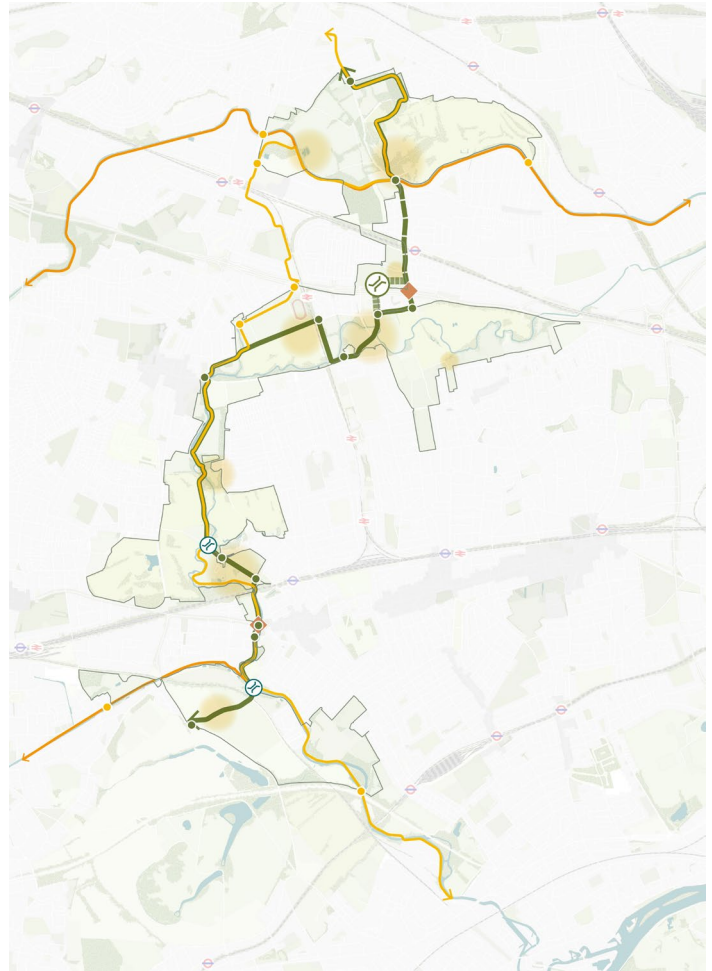




Regional Park Trail

The Regional Park Trail should be one of the first investments in the park to create a unified and accessible collection of spaces with a single lit, flat linear connection.

There are two key locations where river crossings need to be improved and the connection from Perivale Park to Horsenden Hill may require investment along Horsenden Lane South and at the A40 overpass in order to connect the north and south of the park.

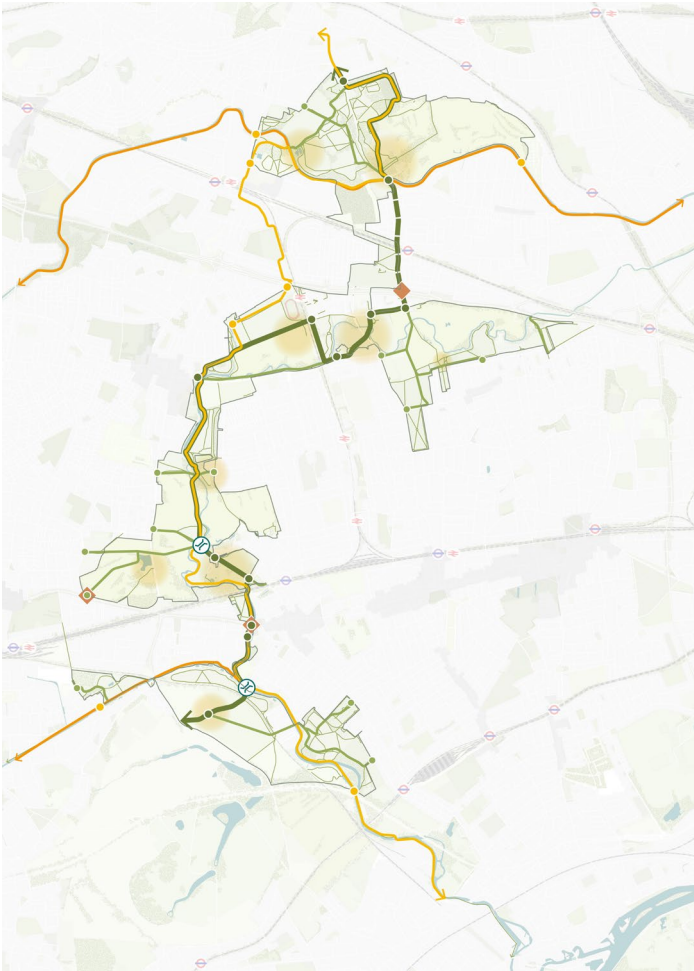


Park trails

There are three other regionally important trails in Regional Park: the **Capital Ring** is an important north-south trail that currently runs through the Brent River Park from the Thames, at times the same as the Regional Park Trail, at others divergent, and heads into north London.

The **Grand Union Canal towpaths** are important east-west links that interconnect with the Capital Ring and the Regional Park Trail, connecting into Southall, Northolt, Greenford and Old Oak Park Royal as well as out to the Colne Valley.

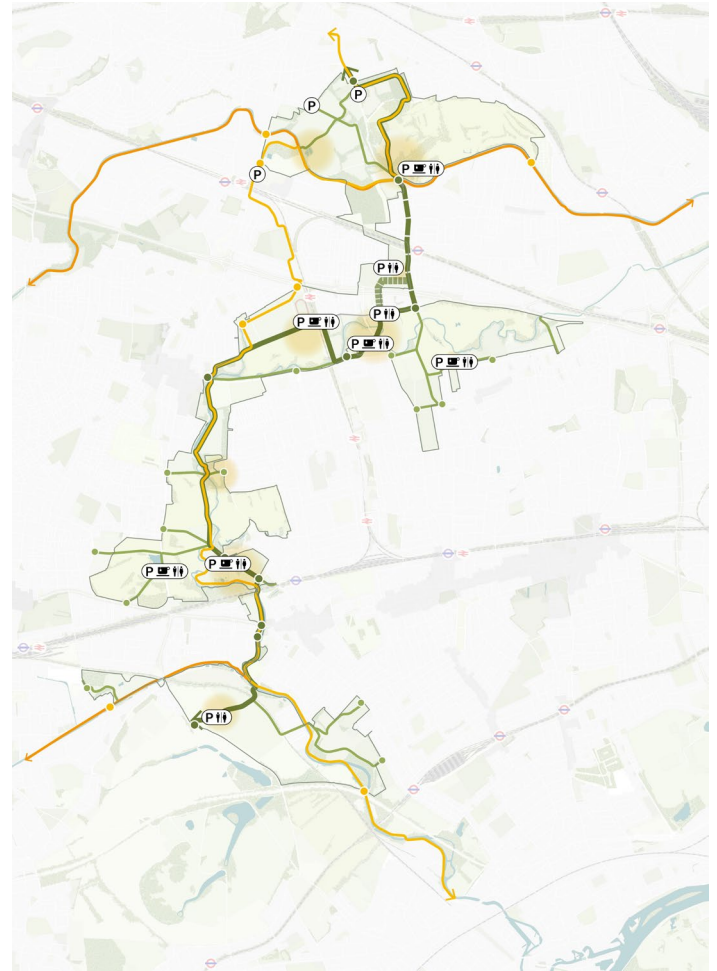




Secondary paths and gateways

Clear points of entry, or **gateways**, into the park should be signalled and branded and at appropriate locations to connect into the Regional Park Trail and out to adjoining neighbourhoods and transport nodes.

Secondary paths are identified to connect surrounding communities from the park gateways into the Regional Park Trail and focal areas. They should be well signed and accessible by foot and by bike.

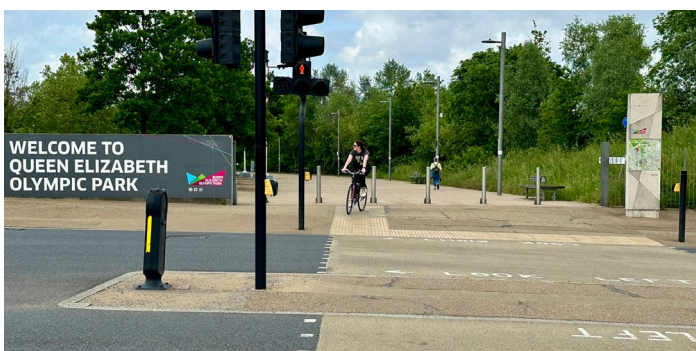


Accessibility

A core tenet of the park is to encourage active travel. Focal areas are generally located in areas with good transport accessibility. Green fingers are designed to make accessing the park by walking and cycling attractive and safe.

Each focal area is served by a car park, primarily for servicing needs and blue badge holders.

Each focal area is also served by public toilets, and most with a cafe, providing important points of rest.



Credit: evening_tao, https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/aerial-photography-park_1243892.htm

Ecology and Flood Resilience



Enhancing the richness and distinctiveness of habitats in the park not only supports plant and animal life, it also provides essential services like improving air and water quality, sequestering carbon and supporting flood resilience. Investment in habitat also enables a greater connection to nature for people.

Proposed ecology and flood resilience improvements include:



Wildflower meadow creation in low and medium distinctiveness grasslands to enhance ecological distinctiveness, as has been led at Warren Farm.



Wetland meadow creation in existing meadows which flood regularly to develop biodiverse habitat and manage flood risk.



Artificial wetland creation in Pear Tree Park, an area with low ecological distinctiveness and which floods frequently to strengthen flood resilience, improve water quality, carbon sequestration and ecology.



Brownfield Open Mosaic Habitat, a unique priority habitat on previously developed land, on the existing derelict Warren Farm buildings site.

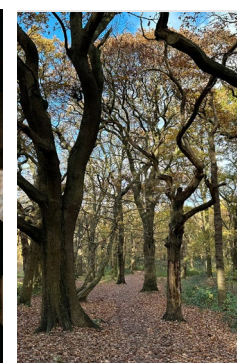
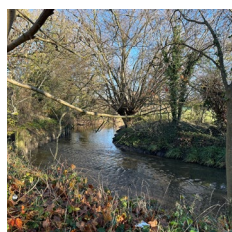


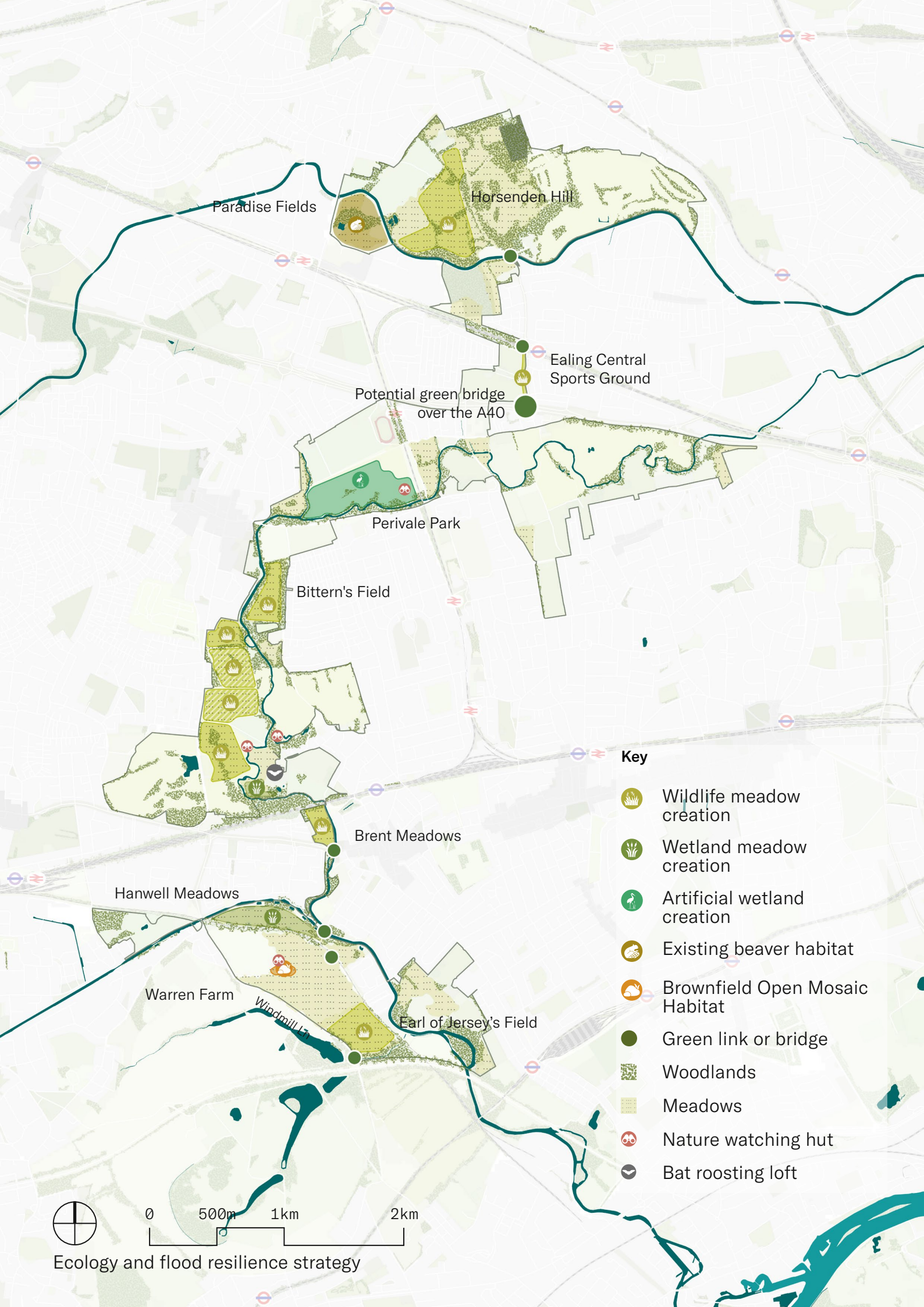
Improved **green links** in key places to create ecological continuity.



Nature watching huts that supports sensitive interactions with nature.

Natural Sustainable Urban Drainage features and improved drainage of sports pitches to reduce the risk of flooding.





Paradise Fields

Horsenden Hill

Ealing Central Sports Ground

Potential green bridge over the A40

Perivale Park

Bittern's Field

Brent Meadows

Hanwell Meadows

Warren Farm

Windmill Ln

Earl of Jersey's Field

Key

- Wildlife meadow creation
- Wetland meadow creation
- Artificial wetland creation
- Existing beaver habitat
- Brownfield Open Mosaic Habitat
- Green link or bridge
- Woodlands
- Meadows
- Nature watching hut
- Bat roosting loft



0 500m 1km 2km

Early Activation

The creation of a regional park is to be done over time, with early phases and interventions signalling the ambition for transformation, each phase building on the momentum of the last.

Early activation

Early activation is a critical ingredient in building a lasting legacy for the regional park. Early activation serves to create awareness of and enthusiasm for the park. It can signal the intent and vision for the park by offering programming and simple or temporary events and interventions that predicate longer term investment to come. Early activation is also a critical test bed for longer term investment, providing an opportunity to test and iterate ideas to arrive at something that is best fitted to Ealing and its residents.

Potential ideas for early activation are defined adjacent: simple, largely programmatic quick wins that are inspired by the long term vision for different parts of the park.



Credit: Jo Underhill (2023), https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/buildings/if_do-transforms-listed-suffolk-barn-into-gallery

Churchfields

- Pop up markets and cultural events, testing the needs and possible configurations of a future permanent outdoor cultural venue
- Retrofit of the stables in Churchfields to act as an early visitor centre and/or events and volunteer space, with potential cycle hire



Credit: Robin Howie (2019), <https://medium.com/fieldwork-facility/how-we-reimagined-community-consultation-and-created-the-museum-of-us-8294cbc7b4fb>

Perivale + Pear Tree Park

- Community events and festivals that signal the transformation to a park with community and accessibility at its heart
- Community wetland creation to promote environmental stewardship
- Potential use of the café as a 'Regional Park Design Hub:' exhibition and workshop space for the co-design of the regional park

Horsenden Hill

- Greater promotion of the uses and programming at Horsenden Farm
- Pop up kayak rental facility for kayaking on the canal
- Explore potential for camping opportunities i.e uniform groups/family campsite

